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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DPC 226

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 26, 1962, 12:40 P.M.

MR. WHITE: Gentlemen, there are no releases in the works. I have nothing of a voluntary nature. I will try and answer your questions as best I can.

Q Linc, there are several reports, both from Algiers and from Washington, that aid talks between the United States and Algeria are suspended. Do you have anything on that, please?

A Yes. At the time of the visit of Prime Minister Ben Bella to the United States, it was agreed that Departmental officials would have a further meeting.

Q Can you go a little slower, Linc?

A It was agreed that Departmental officials would have a further meeting with Algerian representatives. This meeting was held and completed as planned on October 23. It was devoted primarily to discussion of the emergency food and medical relief being given to Algeria through United States voluntary agencies. The United States is continuing to supply emergency food and medical relief to refugees and to the homeless.

Now, insofar as any economic discussions are

concerned, these have not commenced. And I do not know when they may commence.

Q Linc, could you tell us if, during his visit to Washington earlier this month, ~~that~~ Ben Bella asked specifically for aid or if we made any kind of commitments or said we would look into it?

A No; as I understand the situation, it was simply that they would send some people down here, as they did on October 23rd, and as I have stated, these discussions concerned the emergency food and medicine supplies.

Q Linc, this October 23 you referred to, was it Yazzid's visit with Mennen Williams?

A I'm sorry, I don't have the names of the individuals mentioned.

Q There is a story Yazzid was down.

A Yes. He was one of them.

Q Well, let me tell you that Yazzid's visit with Williams was not on the appointment list, though it would have been very interesting to us.

Q Linc, going back to your statement there, insofar as any economic discussions--

A Yes?

Q These have not taken place and you do not know when they will start?

A That's right.

Q Are you saying by that that there is an agreement to hold economic talks with the Algerians?

A Not necessarily, no. This matter hasn't arisen yet, to my knowledge.

Q Well, the situation is then like talks haven't been broken off because they haven't been started. This report that they have been broken off is not true?

A That's right.

Q You mean the Algerian regime hasn't indicated even informally it's a candidate for American economic aid?

A The discussions, as I understand it, John, and the delegation that came down concerned themselves with this emergency food and medicine.

Q Yes.

A Now, to my knowledge they have not taken up with us, and when I say economic discussions I mean the type of development stuff and all that under the aid program to my knowledge that has not yet arisen. And, as I say, I just can't forecast when it may.

Q Has the State Department told the AID agency not to start economic talks with the Algerians?

A I don't know anything about that, in the light of the fact that nothing has been initiated as yet.

Q Linc, do you have anything on reports the Algerians have agreed to let the Soviets use some of their bases or areas for bases in connection with the Cuban situation?

A You would have to speak to the Algerians about that. I'm not ^{able} ~~the deputy~~ to speak for them.

Q Linc, in connection with another problem, the Indian President has just declared a state of emergency.

A Yes.

Q In connection with the continued attacks by the Red Chinese.

A Yes.

Q And there have also been Indian officials quoted in New Delhi as saying they were willing to accept military aid from any friendly country. Do we plan any such aid?

A Well, let's take these one at a time. So far as the declaration of a state of emergency is concerned, this is a further indication of the seriousness of the situation created by the aggressive actions of the Chinese Communists. India has our full sympathy.

Now, insofar as equipment is concerned, two officials--an Indian Defense Ministry official--

Q I'm sorry, Linc, two officials, comma?

A Two officials: An Indian Defense Ministry

official accompanied by a squadron leader--I don't have either of these gentlemen's names--of the Indian Air Force has just arrived in this country. They are interested in discussing arrangements for the purchase of spare parts for C-119 aircraft previously sold to India.

Now, as to the intimation by Prime Minister Nehru that India might seek military assistance from friendly countries, as I have stated previously, we will give sympathetic consideration to Indian requests for procurement of US military supplies just as we have in the past.

Q Have there been any such requests?

A Other than the parts for C-119's, I know of none.

Q Linc, according to a Moscow story, the Soviets imposed new restrictions on the travel of diplomats. Do we have any official knowledge of this?

A No. But this situation is being closely followed. Let me just go over this with you. To date, there has been no official Soviet announcement of a change in their policy on travel within the USSR. The Department has, however, noted reports of increased restrictions and in some cases cancellations of recent travel by Western diplomats in the Soviet Union. As I have already stated, these and any further Soviet actions against Western travel

are being very closely followed here in Washington.

Q In the past when the Russians have imposed temporary restrictions of that kind, have we sometimes reciprocated?

A I don't want to befog the crystal ball on that at the moment.

Q What about reported harassments on the access routes to West Berlin?

A What?

Q Can he continue on this?

Q Yes.

Q Paul's question dealt with the past.

A That is quite true. You know the history of this. You certainly should know it, those of you who have covered the Department. It was the Soviet Union which initially imposed these restrictions. Similar restrictions were imposed here, but I reiterate to you that the United States time and time again has proposed that these restrictions be eliminated. They have not been.

Q Well, Linc, let me ask the question directly. If the report of these additional restrictions are borne out, will we take similar measures?

A John, as I said to Paul here, I don't want to speculate on that. It's idle to speculate at this particular moment.

Q May I rephrase my question. Apart from the permanent restrictions that involve large parts of the country being off limits, the Russians in the past have imposed temporary restrictions. On those past occasions, have we sometimes reciprocated?

A Can anybody help me on that?

MR. REAP: I can't.

A I'm not sure that we have ~~anything~~.

Q Linc, were any American diplomats in Moscow affected so far?

A I'm sorry, I don't know the answer to that question.

Q Would you answer my question now. What about these reports of new harrassments, or delays at least, of access to West Berlin?

A Well, that is handled locally. I know of no recent ones.

Q It was on the wire today.

A Well, you are ahead of me. I think I explained at other times that our reports come in a little later than yours.

Q Linc, to return to India, this sympathetic consideration you mentioned, would that be arms on a commercial basis or military aid under the--

A The Indians have never requested grant aid in

the military field. And I would assume that they would continue that policy. I have no way of knowing.

Q Linc, do you have any comment on the activities in the Caribbean, not to ignore that subject entirely?

A Well, I would like you to pinpoint your question a little further.

(Laughter)

The Caribbean is a rather large area.

Q Linc, I have one connected with that.

A The last I heard the swells were at two feet.

(Laughter)

Q Linc?

A Yes, sir?

Q Do you have any comment on reports that Brazil is cool toward the action?

A Yes. There is one report, for example, that President Goulart has delivered a letter to United States Ambassador Lincoln Gordon appealing against any armed intervention in Cuba. Now, with respect to that report, we have no information that Ambassador Gordon has received a letter on this subject.

Now, there is, I should say, also reported comment by former Governor and now Deputy Elect to the Brazilian Congress, Elio Brizola, who is President Goulart's brother-in-law, to the effect that the Brazilian Ambassador to the

OAS exceeded the instructions of his government in voting for the OAS resolution of October 23rd.

Now, with respect to this, let me point out that a deputy from one state does not speak officially for Brazil. The Brazilian Government, by official pronouncement, subsequent to the adoption of the OAS resolution, clearly and specifically indicated and reaffirmed its support of the action taken. This resolution, as all of you know, calls for, and now I quote, "the immediate dismantling and withdrawal from Cuba of all missiles and other weapons with any offensive capacity", and recommends that the member states, and again I quote, "take all measures, individually and collectively, including the use of armed force, that they may deem necessary to insure that the Government of Cuba cannot continue to receive from the Sino-Soviet powers military material and related supplies which may threaten the peace--

Q From the Sino-Soviet, I'm sorry?

A --the Sino-Soviet powers, military material and related supplies which may threaten the peace and security of the continent."

Q Linc, do you have any comment on the hand grenade, or the grenade attacks in Saigon? Were any Americans harmed?

A I'm sorry, I forgot to check that out. I don't know.

Q Linc, is there any high-level briefing scheduled for NATO or the Organization of American States representatives?

A Well, let me just point out to you that through the permanent representatives of both organizations, they are meeting on a regular basis.

Q Linc, yesterday you listed in your afternoon briefing eight countries that have supplied assistance and support.

A Yes.

Q Any additions or elaborations?

A Yes. Yes, there is some additional material.

There continue to be highly gratifying indications from Latin American countries of a desire to assist in the quarantine operations in the Caribbean initiated by the United States. Information regarding these offers of assistance is still coming in from our missions.

I can add to yesterday's reports that the Dominican Republic has announced it will make available naval units, airports, naval bases, and other installations. Haiti has announced its offer of port facilities to United States forces engaged in the quarantine. Various Ambassadors to the OAS are informing that body of the steps they are taking in conformity with the resolution adopted by the

Council acting provisionally as the organ of consultation. Now, there may be more elaboration on this by Secretary General José Mora at a news conference at the OAS at 2:30 this afternoon.

Q Linc, some people, including editors--

A Excuse me, Joe. I'm a little on the deaf side.

Q Some people, including editors, are wondering what the position of the United States Government is towards the legality of a possible military invasion of Cuba. They would like to know, they say that some governments--

A Joe, let's chop that off right here.

(Laughter)

A My job is to attempt as best I can to inform you of the facts as they exist and not slobber my thumb.

Q Returning to India, it was reported that Air Marshall Singh of India was on his way to Britain and this country for an air transport, sometime ago. Do you have any information on that?

A I'm sorry, I'm just not informed on that.

Joe, let's put this thing in context here. About the best I can do is refer you on a background basis to a statement made by a White House official similarly on a background basis last night. This official said, "It is

evident, self-evident, that the quarantine will continue. The principal objective of the quarantine is stated both in the President's speech and in his message to U Thant, namely, the elimination of the offensive missile bases from Cuba", and he added, "Work is continuing on these bases."

In other words, there are two matters involved here. One is the continuation toward Cuba of Soviet ships; the other is the fact that these bases are still there and that the work on them continues. *End Background.*

Now, you are all aware of the search of this ship this morning. I'd just like to point out to you, as I think was stated, this ship originated in a Soviet port and was carrying Soviet cargo. As was stated last night, the build-up within Cuba itself is continuing. And in this connection, I would like to underline--

Q Is this on the record, please?

A Yes. I would like to underline that portion of the President's speech of Monday night in which he said, and I quote, "Should these offensive military preparations continue, thus increasing the threat to the Hemisphere--

Q Just a little slower, Linc.

A "Should these offensive military preparations continue, thus increasing the threat to the Hemisphere, further action will be justified."

Now, I simply emphasize the significance of that

statement. But as for speculation as to further steps, that is not my function here. I simply cite to you the gravity of the situation.

Q Linc, by your statement that the build-up continues, do you mean that ships are arriving despite the blockade?

A No, I do not. I mean, and I go back to a background basis here, that surveillance of Cuba is continuing. That surveillance discloses that there has been no close-down of work on these missile sites, that that work is continuing. *End Background.*

Q Linc, just before you got to that passage you mentioned that this ship had been searched today.

A Yes.

Q Did you mean to imply that that ship, that its cargo of Soviet origin involved offensive weapons, or was it--

A No, I did not mean to say that.

Q Linc, there were reports that this was a ship of Panamanian registry, not Lebanese.

A Well, there is some confusion on this, and I don't want to add to the confusion. I will tell you my understanding is that this is a Panamanian ship.

Q I beg your pardon? Will you say that again,

Linc?

A Panamanian.

Q Is that background?

A Yes. Because, as I say, I don't want to-- this is really Defense's area, not mine.

Q Linc, the stuff I saw from Defense coming out didn't say about the crew. Now, whether Panamanian or Lebanese, does it mean a Lebanese or Panamanian crew?

A I have no information on that.

Q Linc, could we go specific on this. It was a Panamanian registry or ownership?

A Registry is my understanding.

Q But under charter to the Soviet Union?

A That's correct.

Q Well, who owned it?

A I don't know those details, Jim. *End Background.*

Q Linc, have any of our surveillance aircraft encountered any trouble?

A Again, gentlemen, this is the role of the Defense Department, not State, on the operations of the quarantine.

Q Linc, can you comment on the prospects for eliminating the missiles in Cuba through diplomatic means?

A Well, Ambassador Yost has had an initial meeting with Mr. U Thant this morning. My understanding of that

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was that it was simply procedural in the sense that this initial discussion^{was} concerned with how the discussions would proceed.

Q Linc, is it your understanding that we would accept Cuba's or Russia's word that these bases had been dismantled?

A Words mean very little here. Surveillance indicates the opposite.

Q Anything more on the commercial shipping guidelines?

A Yes. Work is proceeding, both on the shipping guidelines and on procedures for advanced checkout of cargos which would permit ships to proceed through the quarantine area without delay. On the latter thing I hope to have something later in the day. On the former, I just don't know when we will have that.

Q What was the former again?

A The former was the four points.

Q Can you clarify what exactly is the role to be of Mr. John McCloy at the UN, please?

A I can't clarify it. All I know is the White House announcement that he would assist Ambassador Stevenson.

Q You don't know whether he is to sit in for the United States in any discussions?

A I don't know those details.

Q Linc, were you on background when you were talking about these missile sites, the work continuing on them?

Q No. No, that was on the record.

Q Linc, can we ask in that same area, are any more missile sites being opened up?

A I have no information on that.

Q Linc, in this quotation you read from the President, in which you referred to further action--

A Yes.

Q Is it your understanding that that could include military action?

A I will stick to his words, Jim. As I say, you are going to have to bear with me. It is of no utility to you for me to slobber my thumb on these situations.

Q Linc, could you tell us something about the degree to which these things are being done? Are they being developed intensively around the clock?

A I don't have all that precise information, John. The best I can say is that it is proceeding.

Q Linc, you said these discussions in New York concerned the future proceedings there. Can you elaborate on that and tell us what those are?

A No. The first go-around is always procedural.

how you are going to proceed with the discussions, things of that nature.

Q Well, what did they agree on?

A I don't know.

Q Linc, in connection with your identifying the ship as Panamanian, is it your understanding that--

A Please, don't hold me to that, gentlemen. That is just my understanding of it.

Q Yes. Is it your understanding that Panama has barred all of its ships from going to Cuba?

A It has. It has. But ships--but ships that were chartered some months ago I suppose legally they may feel that they are bound to that charter until its expiration. There again you get into a field that is over my head. And I don't want to get into it.

Q Well, the British Government has barred all ships though, Linc, both charter and otherwise. Could the explanation on this be that it was already at sea?

A John, obviously this ship which went to a Soviet port to pick up a Soviet cargo did that some days, if not weeks, ago.

Q Linc, was there a meeting of Foreign diplomats here this morning?

A Not that I am informed about. Could any of my colleagues help me?

Q I have one other question, Linc, in connection with a charge by--

A I have been alerted.

(Laughter)

Q --by Mr. M. G. Snyder.

Q It sounds like a planted question.

A Believe me it's not planted from my side.

Q A Congressional candidate who has charged the Federal Government with providing funds to Kenya, "for the purpose of extra wives for Government officials".

(Laughter)

Q Oh, no!

A Well, I think, given the seriousness of the situation in the world today, a little levity here is not out of order. I have no comment on the statement of this Congressman. The facts, as I understand them--

Q Congressional candidate.

A Oh, I beg your pardon.

(Laughter)

A A hopeful Congressman.

(Laughter)

The facts, as I understand them, are as follows:

The story is a little complicated.

(Laughter)

And all these references to buying wives go back to one particular incident. At the beginning of this year's discussions--I beg your pardon. At the beginning of this year, discussions were being held between representatives of the African Chamber of Commerce and trade officers regarding the general principles of what is known as the Traders Loans Schemes.

(Laughter)

Q Oh, no!

A That is to say, the size of the loans offered the types of checks to be made, &c. During these discussions, one of the Chamber of Commerce representatives complained that too much time and trouble was being spent in checking on the use of loans. The trade officer replied by saying that this was very necessary and added that he had had a case in which a loan had been given for trading purposes but promptly used on the purchase of a wife.

(Laughter)

Now, gentlemen, this all occurred on the original pilot scheme which was financed entirely out of Kenya Government funds and before the American ICA, as it was then known, funds came into this picture, before 1955.

As far as we know, this is the only case of its kind. Now, details of this case are hard to come by. The

word we get is that the man concerned was regarded as a reputable trader in a small way.

(Laughter)

And the loan he received of over 200 pounds was probably a bigger sum of money than he had ever had in his hands before. For whatever reason, he did indeed buy himself a wife and go on a prolonged holiday.

(Laughter)

Q With both wives?

A Which used up all the money, lost him his newly bought wife, and is reported to have ruined his health.

(Laughter)

Q Where is the moral?

Q Thank you, Linc.

A You're welcome.

(Whereupon, at 1:17 p.m. the briefing was closed.)